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AUTHOR Johnson-Kwartler, Patricia
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ABSTRACT

The literature on teaching does not include the perspectives of the student teacher in learning to teach, particularly in rural contexts. This study explored the development of two early childhood education student teachers' pedagogical perspectives, with respect to enactment of curriculum in two rural contexts. Two case studies illustrate the phenomenological experience and meaning-making of each student teacher. The case studies were compared and contrasted with aspects of rural socialization and seven theories of a teacher's personal growth. The study identified conventional wisdom, cultural myths, and beliefs about the context of student teaching. Two significant findings that emerged from the experiences were that the two student teachers: (1) tend to reflect "rural socialization" that contradicts their spoken progressive ideology; and (2) "professional growth" was limited due to energy spent decoding the perceived power of the classroom context which was more urgent than decoding the cultural context or needs of the children. The study method reflects the view that pedagogy is a way of being, rather than an assembly of technical products. The findings pose implications for both teacher education and future research. (JPB)

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Early Childhood Education Student Teachers' Pedagogical Perspectives: Rural Socialization and Professional Growth

Patricia Johnson-Kwartler, Ph.D.
College of Education
Ashland University
327 Bixler Hall
Ashland, OH 44805
(419) 289-5339
pjohnso2@ashland.edu

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Running Head: EARLY CHILDHOOD RURAL STUDENT TEACHERS

Abstract

The focus of this paper is to identify aspects of the development of early childhood education student teachers' pedagogical perspectives reasoning relative to rural socialization and professional growth. The perspectives of the student teacher in learning to teach is surprisingly lacking in the literature, particularly in rural contexts. Therefore, this study makes central the phenomenological experience and meaning-making of each student teacher within two case studies. This study identified conventional wisdom, cultural myths, and beliefs about the context of student teaching. The phenomenological data were held up to the light of seven theories of teacher development. This method, therefore, reflects the contemporary view in curriculum studies at pedagogy is not a "bag of tricks", assembling technical products, but rather a "way of being." The findings include (a) pedagogy reflects rural socialization over spoken ideology for blending content and pedagogy; (b) decoding the perceived power of classroom context is more urgent than decoding the cultural context or needs of children. Implications for future research and higher education are suggested.

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Early Childhood Education Student Teachers' Pedagogical Perspectives: Rural Socialization and Professional Growth

BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Much of the research on teaching has moved away from an emphasis on the problematic (Berliner, 1979; Brophy & Good, 1973) toward studies of exemplary models. Lanier and Little, among others, suggest that, "A more productive approach is the study of meanings and views prospective and practicing teachers bring to and take from the most exemplary and effective teacher education practices" (1986, p. 543). Additionally, available research produces a contradictory picture of the value of teacher preparation programs. Although isolated programs receive acclaim for preparing their students for challenges met in the classroom, the perspectives of student teachers in learning to teach is noticeably left out of the literature on teacher development (vanManen, 1991). Additionally few studies can be found which have a focus on teacher education for rural settings. This contrasts with numerous studies about teacher education students preparing for careers in metropolitan areas. Overall, most studies of preservice teachers do not focus on culture or geographic circumstance, but rather on curriculum enactment. In response to this need in the literature and my curiosity to understand student teachers better, I decided to conduct a small, in-depth study. The purpose is to understand the perspectives of those who are not reflected in the literature, student teachers in rural settings. The broad focus of this qualitative study is to identify the development of two early childhood education student teachers' pedagogical perspectives employing case study methodology. The theoretical framework undergirding the design is that of phenomenology, which blurs the line between the researched and researcher; attention falls on perception itself and the feelings it evokes (Willis, 1991). The change in focus in curriculum studies from external objectives to internal experiences has influenced this work (Pinar & Grumet, 1976).

The literature review that seems relevant to ascertain pedagogical perspectives does not appear with an ERIC search with those descriptors. However, I found studies of preservice teacher socialization and professional growth that hint at perspectives (e.g., Caruso, 1977; Cochran-Smith, 1991; Goodman, 1985; Lin, 1993; Ross & Smith, 1992). Other relevant researchers studied preservice teachers' journals without sharing their geographic or cultural contexts. (Bullough, 1991; LaBoskey, 1994; Measor & Sikes, 1992). Because the majority of early childhood student teachers are women, I decided to also reflect on women's' development.

Significant studies on women's development dealt with perspectives and life stories useful for conceptualization through analysis of this study (Belenky, et.al., 1986; Gilligan, 1982). This study was designed to focus on, not hint at student teachers' experiences, expectations and meanings with an emphasis on rurality. Therefore a phenomenological framework to the perspectives of two early childhood education, rural student teachers was employed. A pilot study of twelve student teachers in rural placements was conducted to inform this design. As a former public school teacher in urban and suburban settings with life experience at rural, urban and suburban schools,

I decided to explore preservice teacher professional growth to enhance my own sensitivity. At the time this study was in the design phase, I was relatively new to higher education as a university instructor and student teaching supervisor at a large Midwestern university. Two assumptions that I held included a belief that student teachers develop pedagogy that is informed by their total life experience (Lortie, 1975) and that they are "curriculum makers" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992). At that time I understood curriculum making as an intellectually personal task, strongly influenced by the university experience/ curriculum in the broadest sense.

I arrived at questions that guided the case studies. (Student teachers are referred to in the singular.) These questions are:

1. What perspectives are involved in the development of a student teacher's pedagogical reasoning, particularly with respect to enactment of primary curriculum?
2. How are the significant cultural, political, demographic, historical, and fiscal features of the rural schooling context understood by the student teacher?
3. Based on themes identified in the study, what are implications for school and university based, rural, teacher preparation?

Pedagogical Perspectives

What is pedagogy? According to the dictionary definition, it the art, science, or profession of teaching (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1986). However, in early childhood educational circles it connotes living with children in a deliberate way from Horace Mann's "soft line" pedagogy which furthered the cause of women's entry into teaching, to today's proponents for the pedagogical constructs of developmentally appropriate practice, commonly called "DAP" . Pedagogy includes curriculum building, no so much as a maker of curriculum, but as a part of, not a transmitter of it. "An account of teachers' and students' lives over time is the curriculum, although intentionality, objectives, and curriculum materials do play a part in it." (Clandinin and Connelly, (1992 p. 365). Clandinin and Connelly also conclude that the literature on teachers as curriculum makers is not adequately covered by the literature on teaching (1992). The invisibility of pedagogical perspectives of novice teachers demonstrates the lack of interest for low status persons in schools.

Pedagogical perspectives of student teachers are not values due to their perceived competency levels. This perceived lack of competence of student teachers is usually directed at the inability of initial preparation programs, colleges, to prepare and support teachers for the full range of their responsibilities. It is the "job" of the novice to learn from the practical knowledge of the cooperating teacher in this traditional paradigm. It appeared to me, therefore, that an analysis of pedagogical perspectives of student teachers, beyond technical proficiency, as lesson planning, may have the potential to inform myself as a teacher educator and perhaps others.

Indeed, for the novice or experienced teacher perspectives of teaching are often based on the influences of prior socialization (Lortie, 1975; Lubeck, 1985). Pedagogical perspectives of student teachers is surely influenced by the approximately thirteen thousand hours of participant observation before beginning formalized teacher

education. Also, student teachers usually regard student teaching as the most valuable aspect of their preparation (Evertson, 1990; Lortie, 1975).

Preservice teachers make curricular decisions, selecting course content when it confirms their beliefs, ignoring what they do not believe in from their undergraduate course work (Bullough, 1991). Also, student teachers tend to make curricular decisions based on beliefs about themselves as teachers (Ruttan, 1994). This conventional wisdom helps to sustain the dualism between content and pedagogy, confirming my assumptions about teachers as curriculum builders.

The intellectual work of student teaching becomes overshadowed by the cultural myths of experience as the best teacher. The conventional wisdom is that learning to teach occurs automatically as a result of modeling classroom experience. The valorization of student teaching as the authentic moment in teacher education, and the real ground for knowledge production, requires the student teacher to accept preordained paths (Britzman, 1991; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). Pedagogical perspectives often reflect a familiarity with the teacher's role, clouding the complexity of learning to teach.

Recent early childhood education undergraduate education provides students with theoretical and field experience in constructivist pedagogy. Constructivist pedagogical orientations are reflections of progressive ideologies. Current practice employing Developmentally Appropriate Practice, "DAP" (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992), the Bank Street Approach (Antler, 1987), and the Cognitively Oriented Curriculum (Weikart, 1967), for example, attempts to integrate learning objectives for and from the child. Specific objectives are learned through emergent and varied outcomes, within the context of children's environments and interest (Devries & Kohlberg, 1987; Lincoln, 1992).

An obstacle on the pathway to reflective pedagogical perspectives and constructivist teaching is the notion that teaching is essentially technical. Creating lesson and management plans with preplanned objectives does not help the novice grow in experience, develop skill in unique situations, or attain judgment. The experience of student teaching is often understood as apprenticeship for lesson planning and evaluation from the cooperating teacher and the college supervisor. Attainment of judgement is therefore limited to the assessments of those with power to the situations. In contrast, if given the opportunity to attend to the inner pedagogical processes (as young children's perspectives), instead of the bureaucracy (or one's own socialization), the student teacher has the potential to listen to the more immediate and important voices of the children (Ayers, 1993; Goodman, 1988). This attention to develop authentic, reflective pedagogical habits is frequently omitted from teacher education (Pajares, 1992; vanManen, 1990a). One pedagogical habit includes curriculum building. D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly conclude that the literature on teachers as curriculum makers is not adequately covered by the literature on teaching (1992). This is particularly apparent in the literature on rural education. For the purpose of background information aspects of rural socialization will be addressed in the following section.

Rural Socialization

Social alienation of rural families has increased as the modernizing of the districts have provided consolidated schools, often far from home. Many students in rural areas are from low income families with relatively low achievement, particularly in economically depressed areas as Appalachia. In addition to economic disadvantages, many children have low educational aspirations, as school is not perceived as desirable for youth to become fulfilled rural citizens (DeYoung & Kent-Lawrence, 1995). All to often the rural school is not considered desirable as it provides limited resources and inappropriate curriculum for the context of the residents (Kozol, 1991). Among the most severe of problems in diverse rural areas are the lack of financial resources, shortages of teachers, and difficulty in meeting new state standards (Montague, 1986; Sherman, 1992).

The socialization of rural college students, pupils, and teachers is in need of the attention of decision makers and researchers to promote policies for these areas that are sustainable. "Redesigning education for the purpose of recreating community-community that is ecologically sustainable may well be one of the most critical needs of today's society" (Theobald & Nachtigal, 1995, p. 135). Rural schools enroll 16.6% of all public school students and include over 47% of all school districts (Stephens & Hunter, 1993). On the surface, rural environments and people may appear to be suburban, but their socialization and subsequent needs have similarities and differences when compared to their metropolitan peers. Some defining features affecting socialization in rural communities are low school enrollment, low population density, economic decline and relative isolation. Schools in rural locales often have difficulty providing resources equal to those offered by more affluent areas. Also, student teachers have been trained to provide curriculum designed for suburban contexts; this further conceals and complicates the value of curriculum and ideas about professional growth.

Professional Growth

The complexities of learning to teach is complicated for the student teacher in an attempt to define "success" and professional growth. The lack of a coherent body of research about student teachers in Early Childhood (Reynolds, 1992) makes me wonder if what is expected for "success" meets the needs of children and teachers. In spite of the lack of coherence in the literature on competent novice teachers, I selected seven theories, some well known, others obscure, to guide my analysis on professional growth of the two participants in this study. This eclectic of theories has ultimately been an asset to this inquiry, some were added after field work stages when I had to consider the concept in a more complex manner. Each of the participants in this study have been considered in relation to the seven theories.

Theorists have viewed professional growth as differing processes. Fuller studied growth by representing it as levels of concerns (1969). Berliner (1986) used a social efficiency model to determine success. VanManen (1991b), famous for his levels of reflection, also developed a theory of growth to be observed through demonstrations of intuition and tact. LaBoskey (1994) describes professional growth as reflection; she provides sample criteria for teacher education students' perceptions (p. 30) and a scoring system. LaBoskey's study is somewhat congruent with this one, but all the data

was from written essays, and the number of participants was large.

Cochran-Smith (1991) designated professional growth for the preservice teacher as three contrasting relationships to the whole environment, merging content with pedagogy. Her contrasting relationships are: consonance, critical dissonance, and collaborative resonance. Goodman's "political tactics" of student teachers describes similar relationships, also merging content and pedagogy. The purpose of his observations was to determine *what really happens*, rather than looking for predetermined behaviors. The results are a description of "tactics" along a continuum: overt compliance, critical compliance, accommodative resistance, resistant alteration, and transformative action (1985, 1988).

The seventh and final theory to be used to define professional growth in the analysis of the two case studies was Caruso's phases in student teaching (1977), all described by ambivalent feelings. The phases are passed through. They can spiral or repeat patterns for different student teachers at different times or situations. The phases are (a) anxiety/euphoria; (b) confusion/clarity; (c) competence/inadequacy; (d) criticism/new awareness; (e) more confidence/greater inadequacy; and (f) loss/relief.

In this study two significant findings (rural socialization and professional growth) emerged from what really happened as perceived by the student teachers, Anne and Terri. My concepts of professional growth changed as I revisited people, sites and the literature to ponder the lack of congruence with portions of my assumptions and original research questions.

RESEARCHING STUDENT TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

Methods

The methods used for design, data collection and analysis are eclectic. The constant is that phenomenology undergirds whole project. The two case studies are compared and contrasted with aspects of rural socialization and seven theories of professional growth. The characteristics of phenomenological case study, participants and settings, components of the design and rendering and analysis are subheading to summarize the preplanned as well as emergent methodology.

Characteristics of phenomenological case study research

The two merging case studies blended into one inquiry meet the three criteria for case study design. The criteria are: (a) investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; (b) when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which (c) multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 1989). I investigated a contemporary phenomenon of student teachers in naturalistic settings, rural public schools and a university branch, rural campus. The boundaries between the their phenomena and the contexts were not clear. Interrogating their beliefs and describing facts/observations from ideas was difficult to determine. Therefore, multiple source of evidence were used, some became secondary as the experiences emerged.

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For example, I originally felt that interviews with administrators, county consultants and university supervisors would inform the study. They were useful for thick description, (Geertz, 1973) and used for testing findings for fittingness (Guba & Lincoln, 1981) only. Additional multiple data sources (Stake, 1988) that reflect the experience and essences of the participants are discussed below in Components of the Design.

Phenomenological study, as one type of interpretive research, focuses on meaning in terms of intentionality, assuming that all consciousness is intentional. This leads research from the realm of facts to that of general essences, we raise our knowledge from the level of facts to the sphere of 'ideas' (Kockelmans, 1967, p. 30).

Systematic analysis of subjective meaning is the essence of interpretive research in education. The form I used from interpretive inquiry was phenomenology. This form attempts to search for deep social structures and connections between inner life and the outer world experience of a particular person's conscious intentionality (Kockelmans, 1967). In this way subjects have the potential to gain power because they are valued for themselves, when what they say and do is accorded status, when their voice is acknowledged. (Cherryholmes, 1988, p. 110)

Participants and Settings

The two student teachers, Anne and Terri, spent their childhoods and adolescence with their families in the Appalachian area of southeastern Ohio. They both attended a large state university far from their homes. They both requested to return home for the student teaching semester, primarily for financial reasons. They could be considered traditional students in their early twenties.

Anne and Terri were asked to participate in this study because they were in early childhood education and assigned to rural schools. They attended a required weekly student teacher seminar at the branch campus of the university with other rural student teachers, grades 5-12. I facilitated this seminar. Attendance and verbal participation were the only requirements, thereby not confounding my role as researcher as compared to an evaluator. Many times they stayed after seminar to informally talk.

Anne's school, in the southern portion of the large county, was at the edge of a pre World War I thriving industrial city that was still in economic decline. She lived 20 miles from the school in another economically depressed small city. In contrast, Terri lived, and was assigned to a placement in the more affluent portion of the county, an area dotted with small historical towns, farms and shopping centers.

During the semester Anne and Terri formed a "telephoning friendship." They were the only early childhood education student teachers in the seminar as well as in this large geographical area. They did not have contact with former early childhood peers from the university. The primary sites for data collection were two rural Midwestern public schools and the rural regional university campus.

Components of the Design

Components of the design were detailed on an ever expanding research time

which included: proposal and entry, data collection, transcription, developing themes, member checking, writing cases, analysis of cases, reviewing additional literature, tests for rigor, and summarizing conclusions and implications.

The eclectic data collection components were selected as a result of an appreciation of phenomenology, namely seeking the essence of experience. One well known study in early childhood education that informed this study was from the work of Vivian Paley (1989) which includes daily journal entries and audio taping. Another study that I borrowed some components for the design was from Lubeck's, Sandbox Society (1985). This famous study in early childhood education details settings, movement patterns, physical environments, schedules, language and activities for studying pedagogical perspectives of teachers.

Probing for units of analysis became challenging to control. Participant observation in the field resulted in days of interaction, travel, numerous interviews, some videos and many artifacts that needed to be sorted through to ascertain applicability. Many were used only for description and triangulation, after I left the field and determined tentative themes, revisiting the theoretical framework (Patton, 1990). I bracketed (McGee-Brown, 1995) my meanings, attempting to remain true to the participants.

I participated for 16 weeks in the field as a participant observer twice weekly at the schools while attempting to build trust and collect data. I videotaped some lessons to use for recall sessions, to ponder what was thought about in action. Interviews, participant observation, audio journals, audio conversations and field notes were among the data sources. The actual context was narrowed over time as I moved truer to the theoretical construct, rather than searching for answers to my questions. The participants in this study conducted their activities within the settings of primary school, home and university seminars.

Specifically, seven different interview protocols were used with each student teacher to audio tape and transcribe. The interviews are titled: life history, perception of pedagogy, pedagogy and context, assessing actions in context, assessing journal and conversation transcriptions, and reflective interviews. Perception of pedagogy was used early and late in the semester with each participant; responses were compared.

Two effective methods emerged in the field, yielding invaluable data that was collected in my absence! Each student was given as a "gift" a cassette recorder to use for an "audio journal" that I would transcribe and discuss later with them after they read their spoken words in print. They welcomed this, initially believing that it would be easier than the usual written journal; the university supervisors agreed that they would not ask to read the journal transcriptions. This data was emotional and candid; they said things that I never heard even in private conversations at school. Also, a few planning conversations with their cooperating teachers were recorded voluntarily. I gave the student teachers the transcripts and we later discussed their reactions to both formats. These last two techniques were spontaneously created after a few weeks in the field when I felt that the traditional interviews lacked some authenticity.

Rendering and Analysis

During and after field work stages rendering and analysis became more intense. The multiple data sources included: preparing to interpret the data through interviews, weekly seminar meetings,, videotaping, use of space and movement analysis, video recall sessions, participant observations with selective verbatim style field notes and photos.

The meanings, and possible themes, that the student teachers ascribed to personal survival, success, children, learning, school, curriculum, and other facets were synthesized through thematic investigation. As stated by Freire (1994), thematic investigation is organized with the student's view of the world. Once again, I bracketed my views and organized themes based on their perspectives.

Historical awareness was deepened before, during, and after data collection for me. Before the study, I worked for a year in the county as an associate researcher with classroom and in service teacher contact. After the study I read more about rural issues and women's development and social class.

With rendering (video analysis and transcriptions) complete, I moved into final analysis using the tests of rigor from Guba and Lincoln (1981). They contend that the basic concerns used to test rigor in scientific inquiry also hold for naturalistic inquiry. The required interpretations are assigned more appropriate names to better fit the naturalistic paradigm. The four tests of rigor credibility (internal validity), fittingness (external validity), auditability (reliability), and confirmability (objectivity) were met with the procedures/ methods noted in the table below.

TESTS OF RIGOR

	Scientific Term	Naturalistic Term	Procedure
1	Internal Validity	Credibility	participant observation; prolonged engagement; field notes; ST: phenomenon recognition (member check); video recall
2	External Validity	Fittingness	rendering with thick description and coding; participant observation
3	Reliability	Auditability	OA: pilot study; autobiographical information; epoché; multiple sources
4	Objectivity	Confirmability	Human Subjects Review; interview protocols; consents; ST: concerns/ perspectives; OA: raw data-concerns

KEY ST: Student Teacher OA: Outside Auditor

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine from a phenomenological perspective the development of early childhood education student teachers' pedagogical reasoning with respect to enactment of curriculum, in rural contexts.

The contribution of this study to the existing research is the thick description in case study format of two young women, student teaching in similar environments who developed different meanings for practice, feelings and context. Their stories are

different, but they have two findings in common. The two student teachers
1. Tend to reflect **rural socialization** that contradicts their spoken progressive ideology.
2. Limited **professional growth was** limited due to energy spent decoding the perceived power of the classroom context which was more urgent than decoding the cultural context or needs of the children.

Rural socialization included rural, female concepts of knowing, social relations and childhood. For the majority of the semester they both promoted basic literacy and character training for obedience, contradicting spoken progressive ideology. Patterns of personal values bear on classroom pedagogy. Anne, tended to stress enjoyment of home, the need for male companionship and ownership of material goods. She put little value on learning for other than practical purposes. She spent time at home talking about the children, but rarely preparing lessons. She preferred to be dependent on the cooperating teacher for ideas, assessment of children and borrowing resources. Anne tended to construct children's lives by considering teaching as "bring up" children. She watched over, narrating objects and events for children to attend to. Her progressive cooperating teachers were frustrated by her presence, they continually prompted Anne to be independent. Anne claimed incompetence, forcing her tendency to remain an apprentice with a "black- white/ good- bad" conception of children, schooling, and the totality of her experience. For example after a Valentine party on week 5 Anne spoke definitively about her "insights" about the different children and her self image:

> all five year olds, it's just really weird- I know they all com from different places and different families but to see the different levels, you know there are a couple who are totally out of it, lost, it's not because of the bad teaching and because they have a great teacher and a good student teacher, I must say.

Taking on the challenge to facilitate children's intrinsic motivation and intellectual needs was not evident during Anne's student teaching semester in either setting. She separated content and pedagogy; teaching was about technical aspects and simplicity. By the end of the semester, week 15, she had a decidedly different, lower self image about her competence, but she did not know what to do to change it observing that the children did not respond to her the same way they did with the cooperating teacher when she "did the same thing"....maybe I'm just not there?"

In comparison to Anne, Terri had attitudes of professionalism. She spent enormous amounts of time and personal resources to prepare for student teaching. After attempting to assess children's knowledge and personalities to provide progressive practices, she met with subtle displeasure because she did not have "as many activities as we did when we graduated 22 years ago ... in file boxes.." Terri determined to be successful decided to become "like a daughter" and was soon scripted by the cooperating teacher to develop thematic units and running narratives that had been used for years. Submerged from critical to overt compliance, Terri became the "model" visitor. It seemed that Terri performed with less finesse as she learned to please and imitate pedagogy. She began to feel physically ill and tense, while being narrated by her new "close friend" the cooperating teacher. Fortunately, in her final placement she was given greater flexibility in the last three weeks, regaining

her health and creativity while taking transformative actions (Goodman, 1986) to benefit young children's learning.

Within a few days Terri decoded the context of her cooperating teacher's displeasure, sensing that her own discourse was disapproved. Weeks later she referred to her situation as an "unfair political triangle" between the university the cooperating teacher and herself. Her critique for which she was rewarded in college, was soon submerged into a desire to meet with success. Success was determined by matching her own evaluation for effectiveness with that of the cooperating teacher. In spite of the constant monitoring Terri had made some professional growth; she availed herself of opportunities to participate in special events, especially getting to know parents. For example, early in the semester when asked about the families she responded that they were, "low class and they come in the video store where I work, with dirty boots..." By the end of the semester she changed her beliefs about the families saying, "I really do believe that they want the best for their kids. They realize that the school they have, the school I'm teaching in, is a very valuable school system... So I know the parents are expecting their kids to get a good education while they are there."

Professional growth was limited because both student teachers spent a lot of time and energy decoding the perceived power over self of the stakeholders. They rarely noted the historical, cultural and fiscal concepts that I was looking for in the 3 research questions! Instead, they expressed concern about meeting the needs of the university supervisor as well as the cooperating teachers. Rarely did they mention the children or their own professional needs. They both searched for a social and professional space. In so doing, they asked many "what" and "how" questions, neglecting to ask "why?" Anne decided that she would learn from the cooperating teacher with an imitated pedagogy. She assumed that both her work and competency would progress from simple to complex, as an apprenticeship model (Lortie, 1975).

Implications for Teacher Education

The study raises a number of questions for teacher educators. For example, are we acting in ways that model how students learn to become teachers? Are we teaching for meaningful learning, as we ask them to do for small children? Should the professor and/ or supervisor provide support to meet the student teacher's needs, particularly in charged political contexts? Perhaps a prospectus, similar to a graduate program, could be individually developed for preservice teachers. That is, some students may need more field experience; others more academic rigor; others cultural and demographic knowledge before entry to a field placement.

Perhaps the undergraduate student should be treated more as a colleague to prepare for the final field experience. Grading could be done in ways that support independence not dependancy. Developing pedagogy that is contextually responsive. Must involve self knowledge as well as that of others. Clearly the students in these case studies were ill prepared for the rural settings, just as the settings were not prepared for them. The in depth case study method afforded me an opportunity to be with the student teachers in a new role. Their tale of events and perceptions about the teaching professional would not have been shared with me if I had been the supervisor. As a

result of this investigation, I strongly support this attention to novice teachers' voices as full participants in their professional development.

Implications for Further Research

The data from this study resulted in two major implications for further research. Both implications underscore the role of social construction of meaning for student teachers in rural contexts. To grow professionally, and in a way meaningful for the context we must be cognizant of, as well as celebrate rural socialization. Some aspects of this resonate with the demand today for respect for diversity. The second implication for further research is to understand the process of student teaching from the perspectives of the children. If we understood the perspectives of the low status student teacher and the children in the experience, we could perhaps formulate policy together. It may be possible to refocus research on ecologically sustainable practice that could impact social policy to reduce stratification (Swadener, 1995). The children may have insights to inform teacher educators to teach other people's children (Delpit, 1988). What is the essence of the experience for a child to have a temporary, young inexperienced teacher "take over" portions of the class?

Limitations of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the development of early childhood student teachers' pedagogical perspectives, with respect to enactment of curriculum in two rural contexts. There are four primary limitations of this study: lack of generalizability, truth value if analyzed through a different theoretical lens, the issue of epoche' (removing assumptions and prejudices), and the relatively short time of data collection.

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